



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

and restlessness prevalent since the beginning of the war. In Chicago industrial conditions are excellent. A job can be obtained by almost any boy. The schools are in their usual condition. The boy scouts and other boys' and girls' organizations are more active than usual. Taking these things in consideration and the fact that very few of the delinquent children come from families from which some one has left because of the war, the conclusion is inevitable that the spirit of restlessness abroad is the main—if not the only—reason for the increase. It should be added that in April, 1917, there were 232 delinquent petitions filed—showing almost as large an increase from April, 1917, to May, 1917, as from May, 1916, to May, 1917.

JOEL D. HUNTER, *Chicago*.

POLICE

**The Fingerprint Method for the American Police Systems.**—I visited the Bureau de l'Identité Judiciaire in Paris in order to see the workings of the Department and in order to discover if there was anything which could be used for the benefit of America.

In this Note I shall not describe the Anthropometric System as it is in operation in Paris. That system has been often described and Americans are pretty well theoretically acquainted with it. But as a matter of practice, Americans are not so well acquainted with it as they ought to be. If the whole truth were known and impressed, a great many mistakes now being made where the Anthropometric System is being installed, would be obviated.

I do not agree with all the criticisms that have been directed against the system. The first objection is a valid objection. It is that the Anthropometric System cannot be applied to women and children. A second objection is that the instruments can get out of order. This is perfectly true, and the charge would be a serious one against the system if there were no checking up. This method of checking up has not been given enough attention, especially in some of the writings which I have seen in America. The implication has been that only one individual took the measurements so that, if the instruments happened to be out of order at the time, the measurements would be incorrect. But in Paris there is a checking-up system which makes it less possible for errors to creep in. Each measurement is taken by two individuals independently of each other. These measurements are compared, and if there is any discrepancy, the measuring is done again. In the Bureau in Paris there are four individuals who are taking measurements, and four individuals who are writing down the results. The real charge concerning the getting out of order of the instruments is this: that two instruments brought into use at the same time may, for similar causes, get out of order at about the same time, and then the checking-up system will be a farce. The instruments will tally. When the measurements are taken of the same individual after an interval of time, with different instruments, those instruments may be entirely different ones, may be in good order, and may give entirely different results.

The Anthropometric System, it is said, can be used only by trained and skilled men. This is, to a certain extent, true. But I was surprised, during my visit to the Bureau, to see how easily accurate measurements can be taken even by persons who have had a very short experience. I was assured by persons in the Department that the individuals who were then taking measurements were individuals who had replaced the skilled persons who were in the

Bureau at the beginning of the war, and that these individuals had become perfect in the art at the end of three weeks. This seems to me to be an exaggeration, and even if it chimed with the truth it would be an objection against the system which, for America, is something to be considered. We have a large number of Bureaus in our country and the number of men who could do that is very small. Mistakes are so easily made and they are so important when they are made, that there is no reason why, if we can use another system, we should use a system which is subject to such grave results.

Another objection which can be brought against the system—and this I believe to be an even graver objection for America than the objections which I have already indicated—is the difficulty of classification. If the work of measuring requires skill and training, the work of classification requires mastery of a very difficult art. We have very few people in America, just as they have very few people in France or elsewhere, who could do the work of the numerous Bureaus which we have scattered all over the United States, and this would make the introduction of the system almost an impossible task.

So far as the identifying of an individual is concerned, after the classification has been made and when he has been measured a second time—this is comparatively easy. At the Paris Bureau the work is done in a very rapid fashion. In several instances I selected cards and asked that the cards be located. The individuals were identified almost immediately. It is wrong to say that it takes a much longer time than the identifying of an individual by means of the fingerprint system. It all depends upon who does the work and how well done the classification is. A classification that is perfected on the principles of the classification in Paris, which restricts the individual you are trying to identify within very narrow limits, is a work which is childish in its simplicity, and which can be very rapidly done. As I say, it is the working out of the classification which makes the possibility of quick search.

It is thought in America that the Anthropometric System is the only system in operation in Paris. This is not so. Of course, the anthropometric measurements are taken, but these measurements have to be taken, inasmuch as, if the fingerprint system were adopted as the only system, there would be no possibility of identifying criminals who have already appeared in the Bureau. As a matter of absolute necessity, in order to identify criminals whose record the Bureau has, the Bureau keeps on taking anthropometric measurements. The taking of measurements would be a waste of time and a waste of money for us, but we must recognize the historic circumstances and understand that a new system—the fingerprint system—side by side with this old system, is now in operation and will be continued, which will probably supplant the anthropometric system entirely. I discussed the advantages and the disadvantages of the two systems with officers in the Bureau, and I finally got the admission that the Bureau would probably in the end adopt simply the fingerprint system. In about twenty years the criminals whose records are in the anthropometric bureau will be dead, and then the whole measurement system may be dropped. Fingerprints are being taken of criminals and placed upon the same card with the anthropometric measurements.

The fingerprint system should be the only system adopted in America. It has a great many advantages which are not at all shared by the other system, which American Bureaus seem to be very fond of. In the hurry to be in the

fashion and in the rage of extravagance which is so natural to us, we have been installing Bureaus based on the Anthropometric System without knowing how to manage them at all, and without knowing the consequences of the installation. We have been losing opportunities. It is time that the extravagance were halted, and that a better system were put into operation, which would save time and money and would ensure accuracy. The fingerprint system is simple. It takes a very short time to take prints; anybody can take them; it does not require trained individuals; there is no possibility of error; the prints speak for themselves; human fallibility does not play any part in the work of taking the prints; the classification is simpler than the classification under the Anthropometric System and facilitates the search for the identity of the individuals. In addition to all these advantages, it has the almost inestimable advantage of making it possible to identify a criminal before he has been caught, if that criminal has a record. Criminals are very often caught in Europe, and have been caught in the City of New York through the fact that the fingerprint system was in operation, and that the perpetrator of a crime had a criminal record and left his traces at the scene of the crime.

I visited the Photographic Department also, and was treated to a view of the most elaborate tattooing that I have even seen. The case was so interesting that the Photographic Department took the picture of the individual concerned stripped. He was tattooed all over with the most elaborate and most beautiful designs, which would have made Lombroso leap with joy and which Havelock Ellis would have added to his collection, as gems. I am seeking to get a collection of photographs of tattooed criminals for America.

ROBERT FERRARI.

#### PROBATION

**Report of Massachusetts Commission on Probation.**<sup>1</sup>—The Eighth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Commission on Probation is filled with excellent material. It should be in the hands of all who have the responsibility of directing probation work. The report calls attention to the following:

(1) That probation rests in the first place upon the idea that it has to deal with normal persons who have committed offenses but who have not become hardened offenders or impervious to appeals to their better selves.

(2) That the increase in the number placed in probation each year from 1909 to 1916 is not due to a lax administration of criminal law but rather to

(a) The multiplication of laws establishing new offenses,

(b) Better enforcement of law by police authorities—hence more arrests,

(c) The fact that probation has by experience been shown to be the proper treatment for many individuals.

(3) In 1916, 26.2 per cent of all offenders, or 28,953, were placed on probation. Of these 73 per cent were released with improvement.

(4) In 1916, \$38,452.19 was collected by probation officers as restitution and reparation and \$303,009.01 from deserting husbands and fathers.

(5) The problem of the delinquent defective will not be solved by probation and probationary methods.

<sup>1</sup>Commission on Probation—Robert O. Harris, Chairman; John D. McLaughlin, William Sullivan, John Perrins, Jr., Charles M. Davenport; Herbert C. Parsons, Deputy Commissioner and Secretary.